

# Process Conclusions

These conclusions highlight strengths and weaknesses of the Demonstration Program for Innovative Housing Design to be kept in mind for future potential programs.

## Selection Process Analysis

In the Demonstration Program for Innovative Housing Design application materials, DCLU strongly suggested to applicants that they discuss their proposals with as many neighbors as possible. It was evident when this did and did not happen, and applicants that took the time to do so were more often selected.



*This attached addition to a single family home in Ballard was built after the project was turned down from the Demonstration Program as a detached ADU for lack of neighborhood support.*

The most difficult to apply of all the selection criteria was “neighborhood support.” The selection committee rated each project overall, looking at all levels of how well a project met all the criteria. But if a project was particularly contentious, often neighbors and applicants seemed to be under the impression that selection was based on a popularity contest, which spawned opposition groups that would go door-to-door in neighborhoods to garner signatures opposing projects. Applicants were forced to follow suit.

At least one detached ADU applicant that was not selected for the Demonstration Program because of overwhelming neighborhood opposition has moved forward with the construction of an addition to her home, which is allowed by existing zoning.

The requirement of having a letter of support from a neighborhood organization has also been difficult. In some cases this requirement led to disagreements between neighbors and leaders of organizations who would sign letters of support for Demonstration Projects. Some organizations also later wrote letters rescinding their support, perhaps due to second thoughts raised by unhappy neighbors. Creating this sort of neighborhood turbulence was not an intended effect of the Demonstration Program.

## Design Review Process Analysis

On the whole, the Design Review process was very successful in the review and shaping of selected Demonstration Projects. While most detached ADU applicants felt that the Administrative Design Review process was too onerous, relative to other review processes it was not found to be financially burdensome to constructed projects. Several other selected detached ADU applicants, however, either withdrew their applications or have not gone

forward with their proposals for either personal financial reasons or because they felt the Demonstration Program review process was too lengthy and expensive.

After a project was selected through the Demonstration Program, it would enter the Early Design Guidance process. This transition was at times frustrating to both clients and review staff. Due to the nature of the Demonstration Program, projects needed to be designed well beyond this early stage of Design Review to have a complete application, particularly one that would compete well for selection.

Selections such as the Magnolia detached ADU that competed well because of neighborhood support, but needed a greater level of design guidance than other projects, particularly benefited from the Administrative Design Review process. Also, the higher-impact Ravenna Cottages also benefitted greatly from the Design Review process before the board. With the right development standards, staff training, and informal design guidelines, detached ADUs could be effectively administered without Design Review. Due to their more comprehensive change to a site, the Design Review process should be used to better help cottages fit into their surroundings.

## What do the Neighbors Think of Demonstration Projects?

At the project level, the results found in the neighborhood surveys was overwhelmingly positive. But on average, neighbors tended to rate impacts of individual projects a little better than they rated the potential impact of the housing types in general.

Comparing results between the individual project and general housing type categories

### Detached ADU Impact Survey Results

<i>Sum of Projects</i>	21%	23%	56%
	<i>Bad</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Good</i>
<i>Housing Type in General</i>	32%	24%	44%
	<i>Bad</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Good</i>

illustrates much diversity of opinion. All respondents that marked all 1's on their survey forms for the individual project also marked all 1's for the housing type in general, showing that their opinion about the individual project is driven by their dislike of the concept of the housing type, be it cottage or detached ADU. Conversely, several respondents among the detached ADU and cottage neighbors marked all 1's for impacts of the housing type in general, but marked higher scores for the particular project, thereby acknowledging the limited impact of the project. Still, on the whole, respondents that primarily gave negative impact responses for the demonstration projects were in the minority.

### Cottage Impact Survey Results

<i>Ravenna Cottages</i>	28%	27%	45%
	<i>Bad</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Good</i>
<i>Housing Type in General</i>	34%	26%	40%
	<i>Bad</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Good</i>

### Interpretation of Survey Results

The findings listed below are brief summaries of all surveys received:

- The impacts of all projects were rated neutral or positive significantly more than negative.
- Respondents generally expressed support for the idea of smaller infill housing.

- Many have concerns about traffic and parking.
- People who opposed more housing almost always cited traffic and parking impacts as their primary concern.
- People whose comments indicated complete opposition to all new housing tended to mark all 1's on the forms.

## Meeting the Goals of the Program

As mentioned earlier in the document, the goals of the Demonstration Program were to test new or more flexible regulations and processes in an effort:

- To encourage housing production, particularly types of housing that are not readily available in Seattle, or are not currently being produced.
- To stimulate innovative housing design that is consistent with the housing goals of a neighborhood, and that fits in with or improves the character of the neighborhood.
- To encourage the development of housing that will serve as a catalyst to stimulate housing production, particularly in neighborhoods where new or rehabilitated residential development has been limited.
- To serve as a model for other neighborhoods, demonstrating housing solutions that could have broader application in other neighborhoods.
- To increase the diversity of housing types and levels of affordability to meet the varied needs and goals of a neighborhood.

These end goals were primarily considered by the Demonstration Program Selection Committee and DCLU when evaluating initial Demonstration Program applications. Overall,

the Demonstration Program has been successful in meeting the goal of testing new or more flexible regulations and processes.

The cottage and detached ADU projects evaluated are all types that can be found in Seattle, but are not currently allowed in Single Family zones. Each evaluated project was found to be successful in a variety of ways, including how well they fit into their surroundings, their overall design and construction qualities, and how well received they were by their neighbors.

The Ravenna Cottages showed that existing standards in the Land Use Code for cottages provide the basic development standards for this housing type, with only minor changes necessary. Evaluating the process and final product also led to the conclusion that Design Review is an important component of allowing cottage housing. It was also concluded that it would be helpful to have additional design guidelines that address open space.

The evaluated Detached ADUs have set the stage for new development standards. Review of the final detached ADU products and the process by which they were allowed indicates that they can work in different types of neighborhoods, and that there are certain types of lots that are more appropriate than others for detached ADUs. Development standards can be written to encourage detached ADUs on larger lots, corner lots, and lots on alleys where more physical space is available. The evaluation also showed that smaller lots can work, as long as the size of the detached ADU is appropriate and it is designed well.

With the proper development standards and processes, cottages and detached ADUs will help Seattle meet the goals set forth by the Demonstration Program.